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Approved For Release 2005/11/29 : CIA-RDP79R00904A001100010024-2

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GPO : 1957—O-439445

(47)

C E N T R A L   I N T E L L I G E N C E   A G E N C Y

5 October 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT:    Khrushchev and the American Elections

SUMMARY\*

A.    Two major uncertainties will condition Soviet foreign policy in the coming weeks -- the effects of the elections on US policy and the December meeting of Communist parties to deal with the China problem.

B.    Though the Soviets expect President Johnson will win, they are worried that the election campaign may cause a hardening of policy. They are going to be reserved and cautious until they can determine what, if any, changes of American policy have occurred. Khrushchev will be angling for a meeting with the President and probably will make some amiable gestures after the elections.

C.    We foresee no great change in the general lines of Soviet policies. The factors which led to the improvement of Soviet-American relations last year are still operative. The China problem in particular provides a strong incentive for Khrushchev to keep his relations with the West fairly stable. There are, however, important issues, such as Cuba, where the Soviets may have little choice but to take a strong position which would heighten tensions and jeopardize other aspects of their Western policy. Khrushchev is

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This memorandum has been prepared with the assistance and concurrence of O/CI.

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likely to try to postpone any such tests at least until he has dealt with the problem of China at the Communist meeting in December, a meeting which will demonstrate how far the disintegration of Soviet authority over the Communist movement has progressed.

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1. Early this year the Soviet leaders apparently concluded that no important business could be transacted with the West until the American elections were out of the way. They indicated that the most they hoped for in the interim was to keep relations with the US on an even keel. In the last few months, however, some new elements in the Soviet attitude have become evident. Initially, they seemed generally relaxed about the elections, but since the nomination of Senator Goldwater, the Soviets have taken up a harsher propaganda line.

#### The Election Campaign

2. The new aspect of Soviet observations on American politics is the emphasis on the differences between the 1964 campaign and previous ones. Usually, the Soviets have a preference between the candidates but adopt the standard propaganda position that in the US system there can be little basic difference between opposing candidates or policies. This year, however, they have

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made it plain that there are sharp distinctions between the contending parties and policies and there is no doubt they prefer President Johnson.

3. A second significant departure in the Soviet analysis of the election is the conclusion they have evidently drawn about the effect of Senator Goldwater's candidacy. There is a clear effort by the Soviets to credit the emergence of tense situations, as in Vietnam and Cyprus, to American election pressures. While they have been careful not to criticize the President personally, they have asserted that the administration is reacting to the growing pressures from the right wing. As one Soviet leader put it typically last week,

"in the countries of the capitalist West, a new activization of the forces of extreme reaction is taking place ... Reaction is raising its head in the US. The US wildmen are fanning chauvinism in its most extreme form."

4. We believe that this propaganda line reflects some genuine concern among the Soviet leaders. Insofar as they are actually worried about a hardening of US policy, however, they almost certainly attribute this to the temporary factor of election pressure. There is little doubt that Khrushchev expects

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President Johnson to be elected in November. In the light of this expectation, the present Soviet treatment of the election campaign has some advantages. Khrushchev will be able to hold up President Johnson's election as a vindication of the USSR's peaceful co-existence policy and as a rebuff of the "fascists" forces. Of course, if Senator Goldwater is elected, then the Soviet propaganda machine has laid the groundwork for a change of Soviet policy, if need be.

5. In the next few weeks before the elections, the Soviets are not likely to embark on any major policy ventures. Khrushchev will be reluctant to become involved in any critical situations with the US (Southeast Asia, Cuba, Berlin) where he would probably anticipate that election pressures in the US would force the administration to react sharply. At the same time, as their recent responses to the situations in Cyprus, Indonesia, and Zanzibar demonstrate, the Soviets are not foregoing opportunities.

#### Post-Election Policies

6. Looking past the elections, we do not foresee any pre-planned moves to confront the US with sharp challenges. \*

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This paper treats only probable policies in the event of President Johnson's election, because we think Soviet policy is being planned against this expectation.

number of issues are hanging fire because of the election campaign, the Soviets are likely to move slowly at first, testing and probing the US to determine what effect the campaign has had on American policy. We would expect some early gesture toward the President -- intended to make it clear that Khrushchev endorses the outcome and to stimulate hopes for a further reduction of international tensions. The Soviets have already hinted at a summit, and Khrushchev is quite capable of appearing in New York for the UN General Assembly. Soviet tactics will depend to a great extent on the US response to such gestures and probes.

7. There are strong forces still operative in Soviet policy which appear to rule out an abrupt shift to a rough line. Soviet military programs in the two years since Cuba have not led to any basic changes in the strategic situation which would support a more aggressive policy. Khrushchev still needs more and longer-term economic credits from the West. He has made some progress in this respect over the past year, and the competition for Soviet orders which he has stimulated promises to yield even more significant gains. He probably attributes this success, at least in part, to the better climate of East-West relations since the test ban treaty. This economic offensive, therefore, is likely to set some limits on Khrushchev's freedom of action.

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8. The line Khrushchev has adopted for dealing with the Chinese Communists has reduced his maneuverability regardless of the outcome of the American elections. Presumably, one way of meeting the Chinese challenge would have been to compete in revolutionary fervor, militancy and aggressiveness. But, at least since the Cuban missile crisis, Khrushchev has adopted the alternative response and has endeavored to stabilize his Western front and demonstrate that it is possible to deal with the West. As pointed out by Togliatti in his much publicized memorandum, the test ban was a significant blow against the Chinese. Though Soviet ambitions in the underdeveloped areas are contrary to Western interests, much of their energy has been devoted to freezing out the Chinese, or at least undercutting Peiping's position with such non-revolutionary tactics as diplomacy, personal visits, economic and military aid. And in Laos and Vietnam, where the Soviets might have effectively competed with China in militancy, Khrushchev has deliberately tried to disengage the USSR from any responsibility or commitments, even going so far as to hint strongly that Hanoi and Peiping cannot count on automatic Soviet support in a war with the West.

9. We conclude from the record of the past two years that the Chinese problem has not had the effect of pushing the USSR onto a more aggressive course in the non-Communist world. This is likely to hold true in the near future. Even though Khrushchev will seek to strengthen the Soviet position against the Chinese in preparation for the anti-Chinese conference in December, we do not think that his efforts to this end will take the form of tough new moves against the US; he almost certainly does not want two confrontations -- with the US and with China -- at the same time.

Some Specific Problems

10. Two important issues are likely to arise shortly after the elections: US overflights of Cuba, and Soviet refusal to pay up its arrears for UN peacekeeping operations.

Cuba

11. Both Khrushchev and Castro have made it clear that the issue of U-2 overflights will be raised once the American elections are over. Castro has not yet inscribed this question on the General Assembly agenda, but he has indicated that he intends to put the issue before the UN in some way. The main question is whether the Cubans will eventually order a shootdown if they make

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no headway with a political solution. Castro may have been sobered by the example of American retaliatory action in the Gulf of Tonkin, but the US cannot count on Castro's moderation.

12. As for Khrushchev, he doubtless hopes that his sharp warnings last summer will have some effect. He probably will be looking for some sign after the elections that the U-2 program is being cut back or suspended. Castro, however, has considerable bargaining power with Khrushchev, on the U-2 issue, since Cuba's support against China in the December Communist meeting is by no means assured. Thus Khrushchev almost certainly will provide Cuba with strong political support, in the UN and elsewhere, on the overflight issue. But the Soviets probably will want to avoid a showdown with the US at least until after the December meeting of Communist parties.

#### Article 19

13. A second issue could arise when the UN General Assembly convenes for its 19th session on 10 November. Under Article 19, the Soviets are technically liable to lose their General Assembly vote if they do not pay on their arrears for the UN peacekeeping forces in the Middle East and the Congo. The Soviets have been

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adamant in their refusal to pay, and they are not likely to change this position. Article 19 is not likely to be applied automatically, and the Soviets seem fairly confident that the unwillingness of many UN members to face a showdown on this issue will enable them to defeat any parliamentary maneuvering to deprive them of a vote. Nevertheless, the Soviets are not looking for a showdown. They have repeatedly hinted that they would welcome a postponement or compromise and the Soviets will be probing for some flexibility in the US position. If the US, however, forces the issue, the Soviets will stand their ground.

#### Potential Trouble Spots

14. The completion of the American elections is not likely to have much effect on Soviet moves in a number of trouble spots where the USSR is already involved. It is clear that the limited rapprochement with the West was not intended to curb anti-Western policies in the underdeveloped world or cause the Soviets to forego opportunities. We would emphasize Cyprus and Indonesia as situations where the Soviets are being pressured to take riskier actions. Details of the Soviet-Cypriot agreement will be available soon, and Sukarno has been in Moscow, evidently to determine how much political and material support he can count on from Moscow for his confrontation with Malaysia.

Berlin and Germany

15. One area where we expect a cautious and reserved policy from Moscow is Berlin. Trouble can always erupt in Berlin suddenly and small incidents can escalate rapidly. But we think that in this area Soviet policy is to pursue a more conciliatory line, aimed at establishing greater contacts between the East German and West Berlin authorities, and to the extent possible also with Bonn. It is also evident that Soviet policy is shifting from the question of Berlin to the broader question of Germany. What Khrushchev has in mind in pressing for a meeting with Erhard (probably in January) is difficult to perceive, but it is apparent that Soviet diplomacy in Europe is being reactivated. After the Erhard meeting, the Soviets will be urging a visit by de Gaulle, and contacts with a new (or old) British Prime Minister are to be expected.

16. The Soviets are also unlikely to push an aggressive line in Laos and Vietnam. The main effect of the American election on Soviet policy in these areas may be to revive diplomatic efforts for a Geneva conference. Despite earlier threats by Moscow to withdraw from its responsibility as co-chairman of the Geneva conference, Khrushchev has put off any final decision. Some time ago the

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Soviets told the Laotian ambassador that there was little chance for a diplomatic movement until after the elections. Thus Moscow might make one more try to put Laos, and Vietnam as well, under international negotiation. In the process, they would be likely, on the one hand, to threaten the US with the prospect that they will wash their hands of the problem, while indicating to China and North Vietnam, on the other hand, that in any enlarged confrontation the USSR might publicly side against them, as in the Sino-Indian border war. They have already sent diplomatic notes to unaligned countries attacking both US and Chinese policy in Southeast Asia.

The China Problem

17. Overshadowing almost every other aspect of Soviet policy is the coming meeting of Communist parties in December. Scarcely a move is made in Moscow that is not in some way related to anti-Chinese maneuvering. The meeting in December will be a landmark in the breakup of the Communist movement. Of the 25 parties invited to Moscow, six will probably boycott the meeting: those of China, North Korea, North Vietnam, Japan, Indonesia, and Albania. Of the remaining parties, many are reluctant to attend and will come only to "expound their own views," as the Italian party has put it.

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18. This reluctance has already established certain limitations on what the Soviets can accomplish. No formal condemnation of China is likely, no "excommunication" of China is likely, and no new International is likely. Thus the Soviets will have to be satisfied with a general statement of Communist policies, although the Soviet delegates will almost certainly exert heavy pressure for a declaration that can be turned against Chinese views.

19. Soviet acceptance of such limitation on the objectives of the meeting may sway the Rumanians and persuade them to attend. As of now, however, they are still uncommitted, and there is a possibility that they are making another attempt at mediation during the current visit of their high level delegation in Peiping. If the Rumanians do attend, their presence will strengthen the faction that seeks to play down the dispute, avoid a general conference, prolong negotiations, and extend overtures to China. It is possible that this group, which has the behind-the-scenes support of Tito, will succeed in selling Togliatti's proposal for a group of parties to undertake a mission of conciliation to Peiping.

20. Regardless of the specific outcome of the December meeting, the fact that the Soviets are going ahead to hold the conclave without China and its allies, marks an important turning point for

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